



The Montana State Library meets the information needs of Montana government agency management and staff, ensures all Montana citizens have access to information created by their government, supports the role of all Montana libraries in delivering quality library content and services to their patrons, works to strengthen local community public libraries, ensures that Montanans who are visually or physically handicapped are provided access to library resources, and measures its successes by its patrons' and partners' successes.



The Montana State Library (MSL) believes that:

- Quality information leads to quality decisions.
- Knowledge is a critical resource for the future economic development of Montana and Montanans.
- Information produced by government should be easily accessible, widely distributed, and free to citizens.
- Montanans need and value convenient access to quality information resources.
- By being responsive to patrons’ needs, the State Library adds value to data and information by integrating it with other data and information.
- Citizens must be able to privately seek information without fear of scrutiny.
- Libraries play a vital role in providing Montana with access to knowledge and new information.
- Libraries are critical for the just, efficient, and effective collection, management, and distribution of quality information in a digital age, and are vital in a democracy founded on the principle of an educated and inquisitive citizenry.
- Information about natural resources, and the land which is central to quality of life and economy, is especially critical to Montana citizens and government.

As the State Library for Montana, we are charged with serving a wide range of users, from state employees to Montana’s librarians, from our partnering state and federal agencies to Montana’s blind and physically disabled, from people off the street to our own employees. We serve each and every one of these individuals, agencies, and organizations thanks to our dedicated and thoughtful staff, and through our innovative, widely-recognized, and award-winning programs.

How do we accomplish this? To start, we operate with the conviction that our success is tied to the success of the patrons we serve throughout communities in our state. Thus, our future is linked to that of our patrons, and we are further joined by our mutual concerns and the prospect of building a better tomorrow for Montanans.

Here you will see our values in action. You will know that we measure the success of our organization by the success of our very diverse patron base. This is not a novel or new notion to the State Library. It’s a fundamental principle. But its shape is dynamic, moving with the growth of our organization. It is at once deliberately global and consciously local.

From the diverse communities we serve to our diverse collection, there are many ways that the Montana State Library works hard to best serve our patrons and to put in their hands the information they want and need. As technologies change and advance, libraries continue to play a unique and central role in information gathering. They are a place for

education and self-help. They offer opportunity to all. Being information smart means knowing when you need help and where to get it. For Montanans, the place to start is the Montana State Library.

This booklet details our relationships with the communities we serve – whether those “communities” are state government agencies and employees or cities of folks across our state. It is our statement on what investing in these communities means to us – on the social, institutional, and even personal level.

While serving such a diverse patron base definitely presents its challenges, the State Library is fortunate to be in a position to work with so many talented, thoughtful, and community-oriented individuals, businesses, and agencies. We look forward to serving your needs, whatever they may be, far into the future. And, we look forward to sharing our many successes together.

Darlene Staffeldt  
Montana State Librarian





# Improving Library Services, Programs, and Collections

The Montana State Library is at the heart of excellent library services across Montana. MSL staff provides leadership and guidance related to library programs, services, and facilities. A professional staff plans, develops, and implements programs and administers funds for new and improved library services throughout the state.

The State Library works as a partner with Montana libraries to ensure that Montana library users receive the best library materials and services available.

MSL creates a range of statewide programs for librarians, libraries, and their communities based on three areas of concentration:

- Training;
- Innovation;
- Collaboration.

By focusing efforts in these areas of concentration, MSL staff helps libraries plan and develop quality local services and stellar collections that result in Montana libraries becoming vital components in their local communities.

When Mineral County Public Library Board President Dan Arnsan needed help developing a new type of library to better address the needs of county residents, he knew who to call: the Montana State Library.

“We needed to set up a joint-usage library to better serve our community,” said Dan. “But we had no idea how to get started. I called the Montana State Library and they provided guidance on everything from raising money to the laws we needed to follow.”

The result? The new St. Regis School and Community Library opened - delivering a highly efficient, highly utilized library that better serves both the community members and the schoolchildren of St. Regis.

But the assistance provided by the Montana State Library didn’t stop when the new library opened.

“Our library director spoke very highly of the MSL staff and so I contacted them right away after being elected board president,” said Dan. “The staff is patient and knowledgeable, and always makes sure that all of my questions are answered. They are the quintessential public servants.”

The Mineral County Library Board also uses the State Library staff as a resource in preparation for County Commission meetings.

“Local politics can be tricky business,” said Dan. “MSL staff has helped us negotiate these murky waters with their down-to-earth advice. And local folks have a lot of respect for the work of the State Library. When I’ve said at different meetings ‘The Montana State Library supports rural libraries...’ I know I have their attention.”

Dan, the Board, and the Mineral County Public Library staff have made good use of the trainings and seminars held annually by the Montana State Library. They have attended the Library Board Training Program, the Summer Institutes, the Trustee Workshops, and the Fall Workshops. They also make a point of attending the Federation meetings to hear updates and to get specialized training.



Dan and his best friends...

“We definitely take what we learn at these Montana State Library-sponsored events and implement these concepts to better serve the public of Mineral County,” said Dan. “In fact, as a direct result of these workshops, we’ve updated security in our building, improved signage in the library and throughout the community, and established a library equipment depreciation account.”

All of these improvements mean a better library system and better libraries mean increased access to information and entertainment and more opportunity for all Mineral County residents.

“Without the support of the Montana State Library, my job as library board president would be infinitely more difficult,” said Dan. “With the support of the State Library, I know that I’m getting the correct information to help our board make the right decisions for Mineral County residents.”

*A variety of continuing education and personalized training programs help Montana librarians and trustees meet their individual community needs.*



# Bringing the World to Montana

Montanans are always looking for new and better ways to access the information they need. A growing number of Montana libraries are capitalizing on the Web's capabilities, as well as each others' collections and skills, and collaboratively providing their users a superior online library known as the Montana Shared Catalog.

The Montana Shared Catalog is comprised of all kinds of libraries - big and small, from public to school to special and academic, from east to west and north to south - with more libraries joining every year.

Library patrons can use the Montana Shared Catalog to:

- Conveniently search their own (as well as others') library's holdings;
- View book reviews, tables of content, book covers, and book summaries;
- Read first-chapter excerpts;
- Scan bestseller lists and see which of these titles are available in their library;
- Request materials from other libraries to be delivered to theirs;
- Create a personal account, and

use it to place holds on anything in the library;

- Use their account to be notified via email when materials of interest to them arrive at the library.

The Montana Shared Catalog helps Montana libraries meet today's library users' demands. It gives Montanans a rich and easy-to-use catalog of library resources, available anyplace and anytime.



School librarian Linda Gardner congratulates the first student to check out a book through the newly activated Montana Shared Catalog system at Alberton School Library.

Honore Bray wears a lot of different hats. She's Director of the Missoula Public Library, and also works as part of the reference staff. She recently completed her Masters in Library Science degree. And, in her private life, Honore is a self-described "book fiend."

You'd think that keeping up with work, school, and play would send Honore in a million different directions. But the Montana Shared Catalog helps Honore in every aspect of her life.

"The Montana Shared Catalog is an easy way for me to access materials I need for work, the Masters in Library Science degree I just completed, and even materials for my private life," said Honore.

When working as part of the reference staff at the Missoula Public Library, Honore uses all of the resources provided by the Montana Shared Catalog. Honore can help patrons search for materials at Missoula Public, but she can also look for books at any of the participating 91 Montana Shared Catalog libraries.

"Being able to access the collections of all of the other MSC libraries makes it easier and faster for patrons to get what they want and need," said Honore. "Using the Montana Shared Catalog also helps patrons realize how many types of materials are available in Montana's public libraries - all available for free just for the asking."

The Montana Shared Catalog also helps Honore work more efficiently from wherever she may be.

"Even if I'm away from the library, I can work on a book order by accessing the catalog online and determining if the items I want to order fit into our collection," she said.

Honore also feels that using the Montana Shared Catalog saves her and her patrons a lot of time because all of the resources are right in one place.

"I used to have to use the "Reader's Guides" and then pull each magazine, find the article, and photocopy it for later use," said Honore. "Now, I can conduct a search on a topic by accessing the catalog and the databases attached to it. Everything is right there - all connected - with full-text articles, books, and other media about the topic. And, remote access to the information allows me to do this work from anywhere with Internet access!"

As a library patron, Honore uses the catalog in a way that patrons of all the Montana Shared Catalog libraries do.

"I'm an avid reader; I consider being well-read part of my job," said Honore. "So I depend on the Montana



Honore catches up on some reading.

Shared Catalog to point me in the direction of books being recommended by TV show hosts and books that have won recent awards. I also check the "New York Times Bestsellers" lists regularly. These resources help me figure out what to read next, and they also are great indicators of what our patrons will come in requesting at the library."

Honore also depends on the Montana Shared Catalog staff for lots of things, from training to troubleshooting. "The Montana Shared Catalog staff is an absolute vital lifeline for Montana libraries and library patrons," said Honore. "It's an incredible thing these days to call on

the phone and get a live person who is able to answer your questions and also troubleshoot any technical problems that may arise."

When Honore was director of a small public library without an IT staff, she estimates that having access to the Montana Shared Catalog staff saved the library thousands of dollars in IT assistance.

But perhaps one of Honore's favorite things about being part of the Montana Shared Catalog is being connected to a group of libraries and librarians who are forward-thinking and dedicated to sharing resources to provide better service to their patrons.

"It's such an amazing group of people that are part of the Montana Shared Catalog; we really depend on one another for ideas and support," said Honore. "I've been involved since the beginning, and as it grows and more libraries join, we are able to do even more for the people of Montana."

These days, Honore cannot imagine life without being part of the Montana Shared Catalog.

"Library patrons want the world," said Honore. "And why shouldn't they? The Montana Shared Catalog is the easiest, fastest way for them to access it."





# Increasing Access to Montana's Natural Resource Information

The Montana State Library's Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) is a one-stop access point for data on Montana's natural resources and geography for citizens and decision-makers. MSL assists Montana's federal, state, and local agencies by providing the public with on-line access to the agencies' natural resource and geographic information. MSL partners with these agencies to improve existing data and coordinate the acquisition of new data. MSL maintains a large collection of information that, as a part of Montana's Spatial Data Infrastructure, is the number one source of data used to make maps of Montana. Some of MSL's natural resource and geography services include:

- Web applications that anyone can use to make customized maps;
- Web applications that anyone can use to access, analyze, and interpret data from MSL's collection;
- An on-line gallery of useful maps of Montana, its counties, and its watersheds;
- A searchable index to its geographic information

collection, which is also available through the federal Geo-Spatial One Stop and the National Map;

- Information specialists to assist patrons in their research and in the use of geographic data.

Olympus Technical Services, a Helena-based company that provides a wide range of environmental design, remediation, and spill response services to the Rocky Mountain area, has been using the Montana State Library's Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) since the early 1990s - way before MSL made its resources available online.

"Even back then, it was a convenient, one-stop shop for Montana natural resource information," said Alan Stine, Principal Hydrogeologist for Olympus.

Today, MSL works to make accessing information on Montana's natural resources even faster and easier by making everything available via the Internet. NRIS staff work with state and federal agencies and private contractors to constantly create new information and to update existing information, sometimes on a weekly basis, so that anyone can access it via the Internet and know that what they're getting is up-to-the-minute and precise data.

Olympus depends on the State Library, and the partnerships MSL has formed over the years, to help Olympus serve their customers better and more efficiently.

"We provide environmental services to a client base that includes both the State of Montana and private industry," said Stine. "Because of the State Library, we are able to quickly access a wide variety of databases

from different state departments. If NRIS weren't doing its important work, we'd have to physically visit various state offices and then pore over printed lists without the benefit of a geographic sorting mechanism."

Olympus recently was tasked with investigating a leaking underground storage tank site for the Montana Department of Transportation. Olympus had not previously worked in this geographic location and thus had no knowledge of what to expect for subsurface conditions.

"We used NRIS's Montana Digital Atlas and were quickly able to see that there were no other investigations of contaminated sites in the area that would provide information on subsurface conditions, such as soil and rock types and depth to ground water," said Stine.

"However, the Digital Atlas did show the locations of water supply wells in the area and the static water levels in those wells. We were able to use that information to select specific wells for which we obtained drill logs from the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology - all on the Montana State Library Web site."



Alan can access everything about Montana's natural resources right from his desktop.

Thanks to the one-stop shopping at MSL, Olympus quickly had the information needed to select an appropriate drilling technology and estimate investigation costs. Later in the project, Olympus accessed

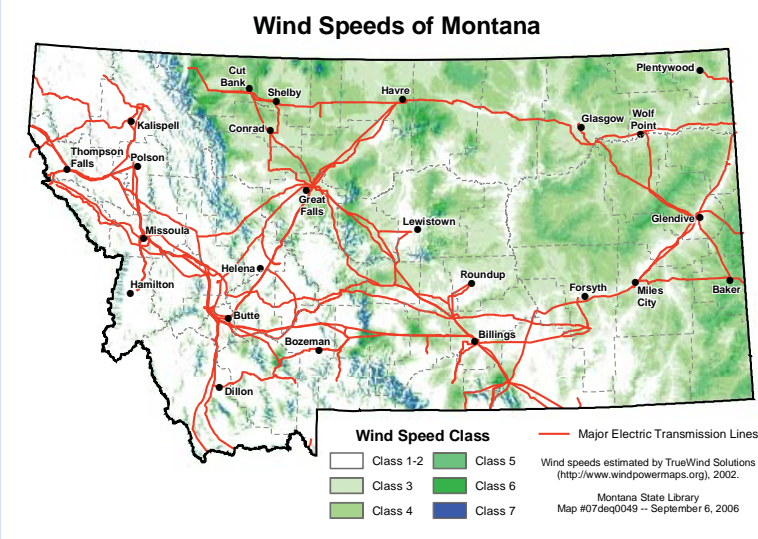
MSL again - this time to provide topographic maps and aerial photographs to develop base maps for the site.

In addition to the mountains of information MSL posts online, Olympus depends on the State Library's natural resources staff as a valuable and easy-to-access resource.

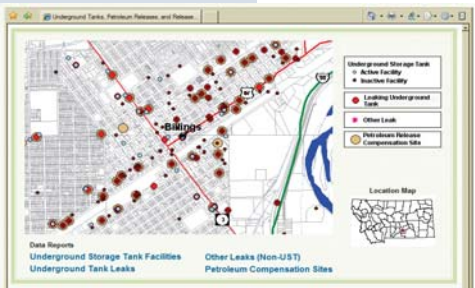
"To build base maps for all of our clients, we need to be able to 'stitch' topographic quadrangles and aerial photographs together," said Stine. "This requires setting specific colors in the maps to be transparent. The NRIS staff provided us with the tools and procedures for making this work so that we could easily alter their materials for our own use."

There's no question that NRIS and the State Library make life easier for Olympus Technical Services and all of their clients.

"If NRIS ceased to exist for some reason, the result would be a giant step backward for Olympus," said Stine. "We'd still get the job done, but we'd have to readjust and work a lot harder and take a lot more time with many more steps. This would increase costs significantly to both our government and industry clients."



Samples from the Montana State Library's online map gallery and the Montana Digital Atlas.





# Providing Information on Montana’s Animals, Plants, and Ecosystems

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (NHP), a program of the Montana State Library, is Montana’s best source for information on our state’s animals, plants, and ecosystems, emphasizing those of conservation concern. This information is critical to land managers, planners, agriculture, research, education, and recreation. Created by the Legislature in 1983, the Natural Heritage Program is operated in partnership with the University of Montana.

Web resources include:

- Montana Field Guide – an online encyclopedia of Montana’s animals and plants, with images, descriptions, and sounds;
- Natural Heritage Tracker – powerful mapping tools to track nearly one million animal and plant distributions throughout Montana;
- Wetland, aquatic, and ecosystem information, with much more on the way;
- Land stewardship maps that show public and conservation lands;
- Access to NatureServe Explorer –

with information on species and habitats for all of North America;

- Publications - over 180 reports and status assessments on the web;
- Other services:
  - Expert scientists to ensure accuracy of information;
  - Quick, friendly responses to data requests and reliable user support.

When Biologist Bill Semmens of the Montana Department of Transportation needs to complete an environmental review of proposed highway projects, he knows where to turn to get all of the information he needs: the Montana Natural Heritage Program.

“I use the resources provided by the Natural Heritage Program for the bulk of the projects I work on,” said Bill. “I have counted on information from the Natural Heritage Program for obtaining data on animals, plants, and fish to assess potential impacts of proposed conservation easements, subdivision development, and highway projects. The information provided helps greatly with my work and gives me a heads-up when special provisions or consultation with state and federal agencies are needed to complete a job.”

To make all of this information available, the Natural Heritage Program employs a wide range of folks with different specialties - from zoologists to database specialists. Their scientists work in Montana’s outdoors all summer, conducting surveys to fill important data “gaps.” The Heritage Program’s database specialists assemble this biological survey data, along with other information from state and federal agencies, universities, and individuals. After being carefully reviewed for quality and accuracy, this information is entered into the program’s extensive data system, which is then accessible to anyone with an Internet connection - or just a telephone.

That’s where Bill Semmens comes in.

“The Heritage Program makes accessing an incredible amount of information as easy as clicking your mouse,” said Bill. “Without the Heritage Program, this information would be difficult to obtain, increasing the amount of search time required. Because the Heritage Program serves up the information all in one place, the citizens and agency customers are served very efficiently.”

Bill uses the information and resources developed and provided by the Natural Heritage Program to complete his work and to make his job easier, which eventually helps nearly everyone in Montana - either through the development of roadways, the safekeeping of Montana’s unique wildlife, or through saving the taxpayer extra dollars.

“I use the Heritage Program services often to help complete highway maintenance projects,” said Bill. “A lot of maintenance projects need to be completed in a short time period. With the assistance of the Heritage



Bill Semmens on the job.

Program, we are able to obtain the information needed quickly to avert any possible impacts associated with species of concern and threatened and endangered species. This helps us avoid any possible repercussions from state and federal laws, and helps us save a lot of time and energy.”

But Bill makes use of a lot more than just the data resources made available by the Natural Heritage

Program. He also depends heavily on the Heritage Program staff, who are available by phone to assist with information requests. That’s something that a Montana Department of Transportation employee can appreciate - especially when an emergency arises.

“We had a culvert that collapsed under the highway near Hysham and we needed to get it repaired quickly,” said Bill. “I contacted the folks at the Heritage Program, explained the situation, and they went way above and beyond what was required to get me all the information I needed on that very same day.”

Overall, Bill and the Montana Department of Transportation know that they can depend on the Heritage Program for whatever job they may be working on.

“One of the greatest aspects of the Montana Natural Heritage Program is that the information you get is top-notch,” said Bill. “When you cite that the data came from the Heritage Program, you can be comfortable that it’s accurate and from a trusted source. When I need information to get the job done, I know I can count on the Montana Natural Heritage Program.”



Heritage employees conduct surveys to fill key information gaps in cooperation with other agencies.





# Serving Montana’s State Agencies and Employees

The Montana State Library works closely with state agencies to identify, acquire, catalog, preserve, and provide permanent public access to state government information. The State Library also serves as a federal depository library. Other services include:

- Reference services and public access to Montana state agency publications;
- Catalog records for new state agency publications for any interested library. Records include full text access to digital publications when available;
- Free notification of new professional library development books and state publications via Really Simple Syndication (RSS).

Chuck Dalby, a hydrologist with the Water Resources Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, became a State Library user nearly 30 years ago. Chuck accessed everything he needed either in the Library stacks or via interlibrary loan. MSL could not offer its card catalog online at that time, and the idea of accessing its collection via computers on state employees’ desktops was beyond imagination.

“In contrast, availability and diversity of information resources today is almost overwhelming,” said Dalby. “Fortunately, the high-quality level of service at MSL has kept pace with the information tsunami and allows state employees to ride the wave, instead of getting submerged.”

Today, Chuck accesses the State Library to keep up-to-date in his rapidly changing field and to develop answers to questions posed by legislators, other state agencies, management, and the public. No matter who is asking the question, he knows he can rely on the State Library to find and provide the right resources to answer it.

“There is a lot of information out there and a key function of MSL is to track it down and separate the wheat from the chaff,” said Dalby. “I don’t have the time or skills to do that efficiently.”

MSL librarians help him locate and request informa-

tion in books and professional journals several times a week. He also frequently downloads data from the NRIS Web site, which provides access to diverse state-wide natural resource information in digital format (such as aerial photography; topographic mapping; and weather, streamflow, and water-quality data). Chuck also uses and appreciates the State Library’s Web site for state employees, which contains a list of professional journals available online through subscriptions maintained by the Library.

“There are about a dozen monthly journals that deal with hydrology, irrigation, water resources engineering, management, and policy that I view online and download pertinent articles from,” said Dalby. “If MSL did not provide this service for state employees, it would be very difficult to keep professional skills current. Technical journal subscriptions are very expensive and generally beyond many agency budgets. By providing this service, the State Library also reduces duplication of costs among agencies interested in the same information.”

Every article and book is delivered right to Dalby – either on his computer via email if it’s a digital document or through the state mail system.

Without services the State Library provides, Chuck says he could not perform his job at the level of compe-



*Chuck depends on the State Library to help him conduct research quickly and efficiently.*

tence state government management and the public of Montana demand and deserve.

“Not only do MSL resources help me do my job, I honestly could not provide competent, professional services as a hydrologist without the aid of the State Library staff and the access to information they maintain,” said Dalby.

The State Library, with its collection of state agency publications that emphasize Montana’s natural

resources, helps Montana’s government and citizens manage one of the state’s most valuable resources in a reliable manner by providing the most extensive amount of information available on Montana’s natural resources all in one place.

“In today’s rapidly changing world, ready access to current and historical information provides an essential foundation for responsible natural resource management,” said Dalby.

“Without the knowledgeable staff and information resources maintained by the State Library, we would either need to duplicate those services on an agency-by-agency basis or do without – neither of which is a good option,” said Dalby. “Real-time access to information is critical for timely and accurate analysis of natural resource problems. It forms the basis for responsible management of Montana’s water and other natural resources.”



*On a recent trip to San Francisco for the 2007 Open Content Alliance Annual Meeting, MSL staff enjoyed an insider’s tour of the Googleplex facility.*





# Montana Talking Book Library

The Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL), a program of the Montana State Library, ensures that all qualified Montana residents who, because of a disability, are not able to use standard print resources, have free and easy access to reading materials. This service is provided for those Montanans who are blind, low-vision, or have physical or reading disabilities.

The MTBL collection includes a wide range of materials in a variety of formats that are appropriate and available for all ages and reading levels, including:

- over 60,000 fiction and non-fiction book titles;
- an extensive children's collection;
- over 80 popular magazines;
- many Montana titles that are recorded in MTBL's recording studios;
- and descriptive videos, which are movies narrated for the blind.

Besides providing patrons with access to its extensive collection, MTBL offers patrons additional services, including:

- Newline telephone service;
- summer reading program;
- online services, such as WebBRAILLE and WebOPAC;
- referral services for resources, including radio reading services;
- free loan of playback equipment;
- and Braille embossed books.

When Mrs. Betty Lou Berg of Butte lost her sight over 18 years ago, an eye doctor gave her the contact information for the Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL). But Mrs. Berg was one step ahead: she already knew about MTBL because years before her own diagnosis, Mrs. Berg's dyslexic daughter had received talking books.

"When I lost my sight, one of the things that was most troubling to me was losing my ability to read and to connect with the world through books, magazines, and newspapers," said Mrs. Berg. "What a relief to know that there is a service in Montana that provides reading material - both for information and research as well as for pleasure - for people who cannot use regular print materials."



Mrs. Berg uses a wide range of the Montana Talking Book Library's materials and services.

"I get everything - from Braille books to cassette books to audio magazines to descriptive videos," said Mrs. Berg.

Even with a collection of nearly 70,000 items, including magazines, newspapers, and movies, the Montana Talking Book Library doesn't have everything Mrs. Berg needs. So, one of the services she uses most often is Interlibrary Loan of materials from other states and even other countries to supplement the Montana Talking Book Library's collection.

"Accessing these materials has helped me in two ways," said Mrs. Berg. "My desire and need to know and learn new things is quenched. And, through that, I am able to connect with lots of people on lots of different levels."

One person Mrs. Berg is able to connect with is her granddaughter. As a right-handed person, Mrs. Berg wasn't sure how she was going to teach her left-handed granddaughter how to knit.

"Then it dawned on me," she said. "I could get a book on knitting left-handed so I could learn how to do it in order to teach my granddaughter."



Easy to use cassette machines simplify patron access to the many titles available in the Talking Book Library collection.

When Mrs. Berg needs new reading material, she usually searches WebOpac herself or she reviews the bimonthly catalog she receives. But when she reaches a dead-end there, Mrs. Berg knows that she can call the Montana Talking Book Library's staff to help her locate the titles she needs.

"When I call the Library, I'm usually armed with a subject or author - not the title," said Mrs. Berg. "But the reader advisors on staff do searches for me based

on what I have in mind and they come up with just the right books and other resources. Then, in a couple of days, I get the books in the mail!"

Thanks to the Montana Talking Book Library, Mrs. Berg is able to conjure up all sorts of ideas based on the novels, non-fiction books, and magazines she reads. But one thing she never wants to imagine is life without the Talking Book Library.

"Life without the Montana Talking Book Library would be devastating," she said. "The very idea of it - it would be the equivalent of taking away all printed materials from a sighted person. You really can't fathom what life is like without being able to access books and magazines and movies until, suddenly, you can't. I don't even want to think about life without my talking books!"



The Talking Book Library annual luncheon honors the more than 100 volunteers who so generously give their time to help others.







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